

time. Finally, we were able to get that done. Then came the debt ceiling, and we spent 3 months on that—3 months of wasting time here in the Senate. Never have we done that. As I indicated and has been spread on the record of this body many, many times, under Ronald Reagan, the debt ceiling was raised 18 times just like that.

Also, Madam President, anyone who understands Washington—and there are a lot more people who understand Washington than the people who are in this Chamber—my friend says: have him—me—go deal with the Speaker. Well, the issue there is kind of stunning how my friend has said this: Go talk to the Speaker. Everyone knows the Speaker cannot move forward with any negotiations until this bill is defeated here, period. Obviously, that is the case. The Speaker cannot negotiate with me until this bill is killed.

So I repeat, the spending bill my friend the Republican leader complains about is not completed. The issue facing the American people is whether they are going to have tax relief the Democrats want to give them or whether they are going to face a shutdown that was first made very unpopular by Newt Gingrich. And there is going to be another one that will be just as unpopular.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The original unanimous consent is still pending.

Is there an objection?

Mr. McCONNELL. I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. We will both object, just for good measure—a bipartisan objection.

Would the Chair announce the business of the day.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the second half of the time.

The Senator from New York.

#### BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I just listened with great eagerness to the discussion between the majority leader and the Republican leader, and I would like to make two points here and then several subsidiary points.

We need to do two things before we leave: We need to fund the government in a reasonable and rational way, and we need to help the middle class get tax relief because the middle class is suffering. We need to do both. As Leader REID said, to do both, you need both Democrats and Republicans to agree. If you try to do one without the other, you will not get anything done.

So last night Speaker BOEHNER sent a bill on middle-class tax relief that was

such a Christmas tree that we knew it could not pass. And he knew it could not pass. We know why he did it. He did it because he could not get enough Republican votes in his caucus without all of these killer amendments to get it through. He could not get it through without those amendments.

So the Republican leader says: Well, if we know it cannot pass, why don't we start negotiating? There is one point here. We do not have to convince Speaker BOEHNER to start negotiating. He knows that. But we have to convince the hundred votes in his caucus who do not believe we should give middle-class tax relief, who are wedded to these amendments that will kill the bill here in the Senate because they are so unpalatable. It is not 1 or 2 amendments; it is 10 or 12 or 15 amendments. We need to show those hundred that this bill cannot pass.

We have to give middle-class tax relief, and we have to fund the government. So why wouldn't we vote on it now, dispose of it, and move on with the ultimate negotiations which will talk in tandem about funding the government long term and middle-class tax relief?

Now, why don't our colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to vote on that proposal? Is it because they fear embarrassing defections from their own side—defections that would show once again how too many Republicans in the Senate do not want to extend middle-class tax relief no matter what is attached to it? That is not a good reason.

What are we waiting for? The House bill is on a road to nowhere, so let's let the air out of the tires, and then we can move on. We all know how it is going to end—not with either Chamber imposing its will on the other but with a negotiation. So let's remove this bill from the floor, give Speaker BOEHNER some of the freedom he may need to negotiate, and get this all done.

As, again, Leader REID said—and he said it so well—we cannot pass the bills without both Democratic and Republican votes in the House and the Senate. Negotiating to come to an agreement makes ultimate sense.

I heard the Republican leader say: Well, the government runs out by Friday. There is an easy way to deal with that, which Leader REID asked for in a unanimous consent request and was rejected: fund the government for a short period of time.

So the logic here is to do three things: Vote on this bill. Put it aside. Fund the government for another short period of time. And then negotiate in earnest and produce both things America needs: an omnibus funding resolution that funds the government that has been worked on very hard by the Appropriations Committee—deal with the outstanding issues in that proposal. There are still serious outstanding issues. Anyone who has been around here knows that issues such as Cuba and the environment and abor-

tion in DC are not easy to settle and have not been settled yet.

So we kill the bill the House sent to us—we vote on it. It will die. We know it does not have the votes. It probably does not have even the unanimous support on the Republican side. I would bet that is pretty likely. We do a short-term CR. We fund the government for a period of time. And we have earnest negotiations that will produce both middle-class tax relief and a funding resolution for the government. We should negotiate the two measures together because, as the leader said, you cannot pass them without both Democratic and Republican votes in either Chamber. Obviously, in this Chamber, there are not 60 votes without Republican support. And in the other Chamber—because too many people are against even the agreement, too many on the Republican side are against the agreement we had for \$1.04 trillion in spending—they will need Democratic votes.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Madam President, could I ask a question of the Senator from New York through the Chair?

Mr. SCHUMER. I would be happy to yield to my colleague.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. I am confused. The House passed a bill last night and has sent it to the Senate. Correct?

Mr. SCHUMER. That is correct.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. This is a Republican bill?

Mr. SCHUMER. That is correct.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. And we are ready to vote on it?

Mr. SCHUMER. We are.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. And the Republicans will not let us vote on it?

Mr. SCHUMER. That is correct.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. I am confused.

Mr. SCHUMER. So are we all.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Why would the Republicans not let us vote on their bill?

Mr. SCHUMER. One of the theories is that there is dissention even on that bill among the Republican side, as there was on the previous bill that had middle-class tax relief in it.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. That is why we vote, to determine whether there is dissention.

Mr. SCHUMER. Agreed. The Senator from Missouri is exactly correct. If we voted, it would move the process of both funding the government—very important—and getting middle-class tax relief—also very important—forward.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Well, I would certainly urge every single Senator, be they Democrat or Republican, to come to the floor and ask the question: Why are we not voting today on the bill that was passed by the House? We are ready to vote. You know, the American people do not get this game. The bill was passed in the House. Why are we not voting? Why is the Republican Party blocking its own bill?

Mr. SCHUMER. The Senator from Missouri is, as usual, thoughtful, politically astute, and right down the middle moderate. It makes no sense to block it. It is holding up progress, particularly because the Republican House